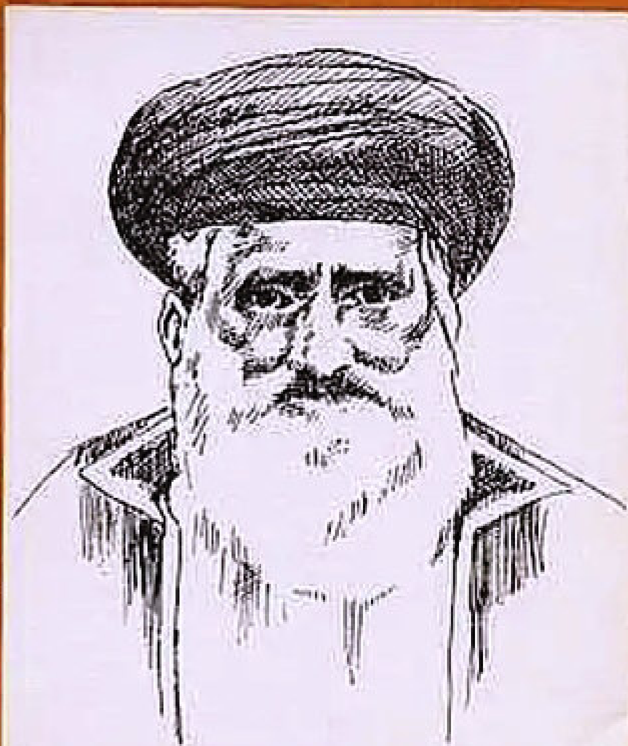



# Śachal Sarmast

**Kalyan B. Advani**



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# SACHAL

*by*

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# Preface

Sachal is called the 'Mansoor of his age'. He remained throughout his life under the wondrous spell of that great mystic Martyr, although he himself did not adorn the gibbet, much as he coveted it. He proclaimed his Master's message to the world like a Muezzin from a Tower, crying 'Anal Haq' and declaring the majesty of the soul and its being above the glory of any religion or race. He was a prolific and multilingual poet.

I attribute the existence of this brief and modest volume to the inspiration of the Sahitya Akademi no less than to Sachal's own words:

> God's glimpse is reflected in the Countenance of Dervishes;
> They alone are eternal, everything else is evanescent.
> The Universe itself is governed by Dervishes;
> God Himself seeks the will of Dervishes.

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# Contents

## Life and Personality

SACHAL was born in 1739 in the village of Daraz in Khairpur state in Northern Sind. Daraz is a small village between Gambat and Ranipur Railway station, being two miles away from the latter. One has to get down at Ranipur to reach Daraz by foot or by camel ride or by horse-carriage. The poet's personal name was Abdu'l Wahab and his father's Faqir Salah-ud-Din. Sachal or Sachu was his poetic name, which literally means 'Man of Truth' or 'Devotee of Truth'. His disciples call him 'Sachal Sarmast', i.e. 'Intoxicated man of God or Truth'. 'Daraz' is interpreted by them as 'Dar-e-Raz' (Persian) i.e. 'The Gate of Divine Mystery'. The poet often used to be in a state of divine ecstasy, hence he came to be called 'Sarmast'. One of our mystic poets Bedil who, both in his poetry and thought, was Sachal's emulator and adorer, says in one of his verses:

> The intoxication of the ecstasy of Divine Unity was in him in a special measure;
> This Man of God, like Mansoor, was an Incarnation of Love.

Sachal's lineage is traced to Omar Farooq, the Second Caliph in succession to the Prophet. A descendent of Omar had come along with the Arabs to Sind, later becoming Governor of Sehwan. He was Sheikh Shahab-ud-Din, whose two sons also enjoyed in succession the same position after his demise. Their descendants, however, fell on evil days and migrated to Khudabad and thence to Thar, a desert territory in Sind. Ultimately, Ahmed Farooqi, one of the Farooq family entered the service of Mir Suhrab Khan, the ruler of Khairpur state. The Mir conferred upon him an axcellent jagir (Estate) in recognition of his loyal and devoted services. Thus was the foundation of the Farooq family laid well and firmly in Khairpur state.

Sachal's grandfather, Faqir Sahibdino, was a Dervish, who is said to have acquired spiritual grace from Bibi Raba' Basri, the Mira of the Middle East. He also served in the Mir's court for some time and then took to renunciation. It is said that he contemplated Divinity, shrouding himself in the very heart of a rough and thorny bush. Tradition says that Shah Latif had once met him there and advised him to emerge from obscurity and reveal to the world the Light of Divinity. He had two sons Salah-ud-Din (Sachal's father) and Faqir Abdu'l Haq. Sachal was yet a child when his father closed his eyes. He remained under the care of his uncle Faqir Abdu'l Haq, who later became his spiritual preceptor and also his father-in-law. Sachal's wife was alive only for two years after the marriage and, after her departure, the poet chose to remain single throughout his life.

Sachal has again and again sung the praise of his Murshid or Guru, the highest encomium being the following verse in saraiki:

*Mera hadi Abdu'l Haq hua*
*Naheen abd hua hai Haq-ul-Haq.*

My spiritual Preceptor is Abdu'l Haq,
He is not a servant (abd) of God but God of God
(or Truth of Truth).

Like Shah Latif, Sachal also was an Awaisi Faqir, although his uncle Abdu'l Haq first awakened him to a sense of divine reality. Awaisis either receive direct instructions from God or some spiritual Master from the other world. Sachal, in his Persian poetry, says about the Persian mystic poet Attar:

*Attar na bud unk khuda bud khuda bud,*
*O pak wujud unk khuda bud khuda bud.*

He was not Attar because he was God, he was God;
He was a Pure Being because he was God, he was God.

The saint poet of Sind perhaps had some pre-destined and pre-ordained connection with the mystic Persian poet. Shah Latif also owed allegiance to Rumi, the immortal poet

of Persia, whose Masnavi is called 'The Qoran in the Persian Language'. Attar's 'Mantiq-ut-Tair' (Language of Birds) is also a remarkable mystic work in Masnavi form. In another Persian verse Sachal says:

*Ay dila Khushbu zi shah Attar dar janam raseed.*
O Heart, fragrance of shah Attar has penetrated my soul.

Bedil, the poet quoted above, has also compared Sachal with Attar in spiritual ardour and ecstasy:

In his poetry there is evidence of Divinity;
In spiritual fervour, emotion, and intoxication he was like Attar.

Shah Latif left this earthly planet in 1752, when Sachal was 13. Shah Latif is said to have visited Daraz in his closing years and, on seeing Sachal is stated to have remarked to the child's grandfather (Sahibdina) and uncle (Abdu'l Haq):

'He will remove the cover from over our closed vessel.' The significance is obvious: Sachal was to fearlessly divulge those divine mysteries, which Shah Latif had expressed in a concealed language. While Shah Latif declares the divinity of man allegorically, Sachal calls himself God categorically. Shah Latif respects 'Shariat', while Sachal deems himself above it.

Sachal, unlike Shah Latif, was a learned scholar. He achieved mastery over Persian and Arabic and like Hafiz Shirazi, committed the entire Qoran to memory. In his poetry also, Sachal is like Hafiz, the great Persian mystic poet, whose Diwan is considered so sacred that his devotees consult it for augury in times of difficulty and distress. Like Hafiz, Sachal castigated Mullas and Maulvis, so that he rendered himself unpopular with the religious hierarchy of his time. He became unpopular with the Muslim divines not only because of his harsh criticism of them but also because of his calling himself God, singing openly of wine and beauty. A single illustration from his poetry is enough to inform us why the custodians of religion were infuriated with him:

Abandoning the mosque, we get drunk in the Tavern;
All this beauty and splendour that encircles us is ours;
Exempt from righteousness and unrighteousness,
We, O Sachal, became Truth.

Sachal is called 'poet of seven languages' (Shair-e-haft-zaban). He had mastery over Sindhi, Hindi, Urdu, Saraiki, Persian, Arabic and Punjabi and has used all these languages as poetic vehicles of his thought. His Hindi and Punjabi poetry is merged in his Urdu and Saraiki poetry and Arabic adorns many of his verses. Poetry emanated from his soul when he himself was in a state of trance and absolutely self-oblivious. Music was his inspiration and when 'Sarangi' and 'Tabla' were played in unison, tears used to stream from his eyes and his hair used to stand on end. Poetry then flowed from his lips like limpid rain water and his amanuenses plied fast their pens to collect the pearls of his divine utterances. To this state he was initiated by a wandering Darvish, Faqir Muhakim-ud-Din. The Darvish in his wanderings once chanced to arrive in the vicinity of Daraz and Sachal was directed by his preceptor and uncle Abdu'l Haq to go and extend a reverential welcome to him. The Darvish on seeing Sachal, was transported to ecstasy and applied the bow of his 'Sarangi' to the latter's chest, instead of plying it on his instrument. From that day Sachal became a God-intoxicated man.

Sachal's chief disciples were Yusif (who called himself Nanak Yusif after visiting the Golden Temple at Amritsar), Yaqub, Bedil, Shadi Khan and the ruler Mir Ali Murad Khan Talpur. Bedil was only 18 when Sachal departed from the world. Sachal transferred his spiritual treasure (amanat) to Yusif. In fact, he loved Yaqub more but Heaven ordained that Yusif should inherit it. This happened by a queer twist of destiny. Tradition says that one night Sachal gave an untimely call to Yaqub from his chamber. Yaqub at the time was not present but Yusif was there. It was he who responded to the call of the saint, saying, 'My Lord, Yaqub is not here but his son Yusif is present.' (Yaqub and Yusif

were mates of equal years but the reference here is to Jacob and his son Joseph; the romance of Yusif and Zulaikha is famous in the East and has been immortalised by the mystic poets of Persia, specially Jami and Nizami.) Sachal called Yaqub thrice but thrice did he receive the same response from Yusif. Sachal thereafter immediately admitted Yusif to his chamber and, embracing him, said, 'When God Himself selects you for my spiritual heritage, what can Sachal do? Sachal desired to confer it on Yaqub, but Allah wills it otherwise.'

Sachal passed away in 1829 at the age of 90. He often used to say, 'My ordained age is 105 but I shall hasten to His Court fifteen years earlier.' For the last three days, he did not stir out of his room. All the three days, soft and melodious instrumental music was heard from inside his chamber. He left the world on the 14th of the sacred month of Ramzan. In the following ghazal, Bedil sings the greatness of his Master, and also at the same time records the date of his (Sachal's) departure from the world:

> Friends! there was a wonderous marvel of Love in Daraz;
> The intoxicated Man of God, Sachu, had manifested himself there;
> On him had been showered rains of Love;
> Both within and without him, there was thunder of Love.
> Of the wine of ecstasy of Unity, he had a special measure;
> This Man of God, like Mansoor, was an incarnation of Love.
> In his words, there was resplendence of Divinity;
> In spiritual fervour, emotion, ardour and intoxication he was like Attar;
> Of his own will, he manifested himself for ninety years;
> Then floating on the crest of the wave of Union, he became the ocean of Divinity;
> He was ready for Tur (Heaven) in 1242 (A.H.)
> On the fourteenth of Ramzan, the Master was on the wings of ascension;
> At the door of that Beneficent One, Bedil was a beggar of the alms of Love.

Sachal was of middle stature, having long hair, deer-like

eyes and an attractive nose and forehead. He rarely smiled and always looked melancholy, being absorbed in Divine pursuit. He had a soft and flowing beard which he did not dye with henna even in his advanced years, as was the practice of his time.

His attire consisted of a white shirt and a white chadar (sheet) round his waist. He used to wear a cap (*kulah*) of green colour. When he stirred out, he used to wrap around it a green turban. It had been presented to him by Pir Abdu'l Haq. During his outside movements he used to don a shalwar of blue colour. In winter he used to cover his body with a black and coarse blanket. He often used to have a footwear but when he enjoyed long strolls in meadows and mountains he preferred to be barefooted. His shoes were of a typical sindhi pattern, usually worn by rustic village folk.

Sachal used to sit on the floor and always slept on a wooden bedstead. He never used to sit or sleep on a cot and never in his life had any kind of ride. His food was meagre and frugal. He loved to have curds and pulses, being averse to flesh-eating. He ate all alone and used only a kishta (bowl of faqirs) for the purpose. He fasted by night and ate only a little by day. He never touched tobacco or any other intoxicant. No faqir ever dared to smoke even the much familiar 'huka' in his presence.

Of his relics, only his green *kulah* (cap), a painted stick of fish bone and an iron yogic staff survive.

Sachal was a devotee of music and beauty. It is said that once when he was seriously ailing, be heard a sweet song sung by a beautiful female minstrel and that acted on him like the very breath of Gabriel. His recovery was immediate. He was a lover of solitude and often wandered, like Wordsworth, in the midst of dales and mountains and he roamed in open plains on starry nights. The humble hutments of the rustic folk exhilarated his inmost being. He never during his life left Daraz and its vicinity. As Hafiz loved Shiraz, so did

Sachal love Daraz. He had no love for travelling and he always shunned the assemblies of men. He says;

Where crowds are, there I am not.

He was against any exhibition of supernatural powers and has condemned charms, magic and miracles in severest terms. In one of his verses he says:

I have accepted only the affliction of the heart,
And rejected revelations and miracles.

Again he says:

I know no man of God involved in miracles;
I acknowledge no astrologer who serveys heavenly bodies;
The priest recites prayers and deems himself a saint;
O heart! run from his congregation because he is between two calamities.

In his days, Pirs, Mukhdums and Priests vied with one another in sucking credulous people's blood and in harassing them with the other-world threats. About them he says:

They look like Khizr but behave like Azazil (Satan).

He rose above the laws of shariat; his religion was the religion of Love. No doubt he has shown reverence for religion but he was bitter against those who had made a mockery of religion.

We became neither Sheikhs nor Mukhdums;
Neither Kazis nor Mullas nor Preachers;
We contrived no devices of these hypocritical creeds;
Sachal! we have learnt nothing but the art of God's Love.

Again:

My face is Islam, my hair is Kufr (Blasphemy).

Singing the glory of Love he says:

Behold the miracle of Love! it absolves us of all religions;
Why go to Mecca! circumambulate your own self;
There is naught but He, this is our sanctuary.

The Mullas one day met in a mosque at Gambat and decided to send a deputation to the Mir, i.e. the ruler of Khairpur

state to urge upon him the necessity of putting a check on Sachal and his blasphemous utterances. The Mir was a devotee of Sachal and all that he said to the deputation was: 'In future no such flimsy and unjustifiable complaints need be brought to me.' They even waited upon Sachal under the leadership of Mian Abdu'l Razaq. Their leader is said to have been so much enamoured of the Faqir's discourse that he immediately fell into a trance and became his disciple.

Sachal fearlessly called himself 'Mansoor of this age':

As Mansoor did in this dark age,
So I proclaim Divine Kingship;
I am that King, I am that King, I am that King (God).

## Wonder Element

In a Saraiki verse, Sachal proclaims his heavenly descent thus:

Having abandoned Heaven I have come to Earth;
I could not be contained in the Divine Chair.

Sachal again and again expresses his astonishment at his own glory and the mystery that surrounds the Universe:

'Let me interpret the Mystery, it is a marvel within a marvel.' He reminds us of our heavenly origin and the Divine Kingdom that we have lost by our folly and ignorance. He was averse to calling himself a beggar because in reality he was the Emperor of the Universe. He warns us against servile thinking by saying (in Persian) :

*Agar khud ra gada dani gadai,*
*Agar khud ra khuda dani khudai.*

If you consider yourself a beggar, you are a beggar,
If you consider yourself God, you are God.

Like Omar Khayyam, Sachal calls this world a magic show, where we dance like puppets, the string being in the hands of the Supreme Magician.

I am under the Magician's control;
This only a knower knows;
The puppet's thread is in the hands of that One,
It is He who makes us dance.

The poem cited below gives us an idea of his sense of wonder:

O Friends! what am I that I cannot understand!
Sometimes I deem myself a puppet; or am I a doll's string?
Or am I a ball in the Friend's hand, or a topspin?
Am I a palace wherein the Emperor
Talks so many tongues—the Wise One within?
Or I am a horse, driven by the Rider;
Or an ocean wave, that floods the shore;
Or I am an henna flower, with its rubiousness within;
Or I am a rose, in which is embedded fragrance;

Or I am a fountain, filled by the water of clouds,
Wherein is reflected the image of the Sun or the Moon;
Or I am, since eternity, the very shadow of God;
That which is nothing—that also I am not;
Sachal has understood from his Preceptor this much alone:
That I am naught but God, the Eternal Master.

In Sachal's poetry the allegory of "King and Palace" occurs not infrequently. This body, in his words, is a palace with multifarious windows, through which the Emperor, enthroned on his Eternal Throne, enjoys glimpses of His own creation. Every human sense is the Beloved's window; through one window He cries 'Analhaq', through another He beholds His own projection and yet through another He hears His own melodies. He is the Seer, the Hearer and the Speaker; the palace itself is tranquil and serene. Sachal makes God speak about the vesture of clay that He made for man in the following terms:

A colourful Palace we built through Love;
Water, fire and air we mixed with earth;
Let him mind his own mansion—he whom we named Adam.
The Bungalow is one, the Friend has provided it with countless windows;
There, sitting among His courtiers, He issues His commands;
Behold the Throne within, solely occupied by the Beloved;
The palace itself is without any will;
He conducts it as He wills;
The Beloved teaches Sachal countless subtelities.

The Human body is also called 'Magic House' by the poet. The eyes are two windows through which arrows of Love are shot towards the deer of the heart. The most formidable door is that of love, the mansion being supported by ingenious pillars; and it resounds with music of mysterious instruments. It is a Royal Court with Divine Music and Beauty inside:

This Magic House is created with subtlest art;
It is decked with pillars and portals as those of a palace;
In it there are music instruments and saucy glances;
It is equipped with wondrous doors and windows;

Within two doors is Love firmly set;
The Gate of Love is the most formidable one;
Seated at the door, He sees things far off;
Sachu! without weapons, He slays millions of lovers.

One of the dominant notes in Sachal's poetry is 'hairat' i.e. 'Wonderment'. This element in his verse is best illustrated by the following couplet in Persian:

*Kistam man kistam man kistam*
*Dar tahaiyur mandeh am man kistam.*
Who am I, who am I, who am I?
I am in wonderment, who am I?

This wonderment comes after self-realisation. Who is the seeker and who is the sought? Verily both are one, as Sachal says in astonishment:

As the Sun should be in wonder, in pursuit of Light!
The fish should seek water and water should seek wind!
A star should seek a galaxy, a wave should seek the Ocean!
A drop should seek rain, a king should seek a Monarch!
All is He—who is in wonder?
To Sachu, God Himself hath said so.

# Apostle of Peace and Liberty

SACHAL calls Man a prisoner of ideas. He can become a pure being if he frees himself from the fetters of set customs, traditions and ideas. He says:

> First break the bonds of ideas,
> Then enter the domain of Mansoor's Astonishment.

Sachal was a rebel poet in the sense that he was the first poet in Sind, who raised his voice against the tyranny of religion and religionists. It is on account of religious shackles, says Sachal, that man has become a bondslave (Asir) and forfeited his status as "Amir". Man is what his religion makes him and if he becomes a bigot or a fanatic, he becomes blind to human virtues and noble instincts. Sachal therefore warns us this.

> Din (religion) and kufr (irreligion) are a snare for the heart,
> Drown them all into the wave of Divinity;
> Then, O Sachal! will your sway be everywhere

He does not preach indifference or disloyalty to one's religion but he voices his feelings against fanaticism and bigotry that result in woeful bloodshed and callous manslaughter. He has shown utmost reverence for the great souls of his own religion but he has castigated the senseless Mullas and Maulvis of his time, who, in the garb of religion, played havoc in word and action with all that is sacred and precious in religion. He himself was a mystic saint and therefore above religious laws and ceremonies. He is outspoken even at the risk of being misunderstood and maligned by orthodox fanatics. For instance he says:

> I shall be a Kafir, if I recite the kalma,
> I shall not enter that gulf;
> I shall not follow the directions of the Prophet;

So long as I do not purify my mind, I shall not enjoy His Presence.

If we scrutinise the lines carefully, their significance will be as clear as the Sun. Not by any outward show of religion, but by self-purification can one attain Realisation. Orthodxy makes a man oblivious of "Divine Truth".

Sachal bade farewell to this world in 1829 i.e. fourteen years before the British conquest of Sind (1843). He discerned signs of disharmony and disunity in the men of two religions —Islam and Hinduism. Like a prophet, he warned them against the disaster, that was awaiting them and his beloved province Sind.

Now is the time when you should discard duality;
Banish religion from your minds in right earnest;
Hindus and Muslims! unite in the bond of love,
Before it is too late and the Sun sets in the West.

Every religion is unfortunately divided into sects, though the Truth in all religions is one. It is this sect system that has created disharmony in every religion or faith and blinded men to Truth. Again, it is leaders of religious sects who fan the flame of discord in the minds of their disciples. Self-worship is a disease that afflicts these "spiritual masters" and there is no trickery that they do not adopt to augment the ranks of blind and ignorant followers. Sachal strove all his life to cure the people of his province of this master-disciple malady.

Be neither a Pir (Spiritual Preceptor) nor a Murid (disciple);
Enjoy the bliss of spiritual ecstasy,
Abandon all thoughts of preceptorship and discipleship;
O immature one! give up this pose of spiritual leadership.

Sachal's poetry furnishes positive evidence that he was an advocate of a new society, free from class shackles and unfettered by orthodox customs and set ceremonies. He was a fearless critic of all dogmas and dreamt of a New Age, free from class and sectarian distinctions. 'Be a slave of none,' he says, 'realise thy dignity.'

Break the bonds of all customs and ceremonies;
Banish from your mind all thoughts of slavery;
Be a hero and wear a royal turban of splendour.

Sachal had hinted at grave and gruesome consequences for the people of Sind because of their disunity and discord.

The sun might set in the West and it might then be too late;
The Westerners will spoliate your treasures in darkness;
They will leave corpses on the plains and hills;
Men of God and true wisdom speak in riddles;
Still there is a chance for you to create unity;
Still you can avert and annihilate the impending disaster and misfortune.

The poet has not only condemned sectarianism but also religious customs and traditions.

Break the bonds of customs and traditions;
Abandon the idea of slavery and wear the regal crown.

Sachal blames religions for confusing the minds of men and for creating disharmony among them.

Religions have confused men of the world;
Men of intellect do not come close to Love.

## Wine and Tavern

SACHAL is called 'Hafiz Darazi' because of the philosophy of Wine and Tavern that he has brought in his poetry after the manner of the great Persian poet Hafiz Shirazi. Like the poet of Shiraz, the poet of Daraz was also misunderstood by religious divines, who pronounced him an heretic and foe of religion. Hafiz made his position clear by saying: 'Verily I drink no wine and yet I am inebriated.' Likewise, Sachal also says: 'This intoxication is not due to hemp extraction but due to the wine of divine distraction.'

Sachal calls his spiritual preceptor 'Pir-e-Mughan' or 'Master Magi' and his (preceptor's) association 'Maikhana' or 'Tavern'. The influence of his master's company is termed "khumar" or "intoxication". He says:

I have drunk from the hands of Pir-e-Mughan,
A cup of intoxicating wine;
His red eyes make my very heart revolve.

A beautiful specimen of this imagery occurs in R. A. Nicholson's 'Rumi-Poet and Mystic':

When first the Giver of the grape my lonely heart befriended,
Wine fired my bosom and my veins filled up,
But when His image all my eye possessed, a voice descended;
'Well done, O Sovereign wine and peerless cup.'

Rumi had drunk spiritual wine in the Tavern of Shams-ul-Tabriz. It was this wine that made Mansoor say 'Anal-Haq' (I am Truth or God) and suffer tortures of execution without a groan.

Of Mansoor's execution, Sachal says:

Truly, it was this wine that beheaded Mansoor;
He sacrificed his head through its intoxication.

Again:

The tale of Mansoor and scaffold is universally known and approved;
In Sachal's head also is this intoxication, which is Love's mystery.

Then he propounds the general truth, which applies to all men of God in all regions and ages:

Love first intoxicates and then mars one's sense;
O Sachu! all those whom this wine inebriates mount the gallow.

It is this wine that cures one of ego or self-conceit. As Hafiz says:

Cast am I in the ocean of self-conceit;
Bring that wine which may cure me of ego.

Both Hafiz and Sachal taunted religious divines for the cloak of hypocrisy that they had worn and for the moral treachery they were perpetrating on innocent and credulous souls. Both the poets invited hypocritical religious preachers and priests to the "Tavern" and the "Banquet of Wine" that is known to men of God. At times, however, their invitation is couched in heart-lacerating terms, so that both were in the black books of priests and orthodox men. For instance, Sachal in one of his verses says:

O Mulla! If you were to taste this wine,
You would go and blacken your face in a corner.

He explains to Mullas the true meaning of religion thus:

If you have Love's intoxication, you will never think of prayers:
The God-inspired Prophet has also said so;
Why do you act against the tenets of the Quran?

Sachal again speaks in the same strain:

We have abandoned the mosque and imbibed true intoxication from the Tavern;

All this beauty is ours, wherein we are immersed;
From Vice and Virtue we are free and have become Pure Truth.

God's Love frees us from all religious exercises, even pilgrimages to holy places.

Sachal says:

Why to talk of Ka'aba and Qibla—these are but false consolations;
Men of God visit the Tavern, pilgrimages are the result of imperfect thinking;
My Preceptor (Satguru) says: only intoxicated souls realise God.

Attar, whom Sachal calls God, also preaches the same teaching in his poem 'The Veil' which has been beautifully rendered into English by A. J. Arberry in his 'Anthology of Persian Poems'.

We are the Magians of old,
Islam is not the faith we hold;
In irreligion is our fame,
And we have made our creed a shame
Now to the tavern we repair,
To gamble all our substance there,
Now in all the monastery cell
We worship with the infidel.

Like Omar Khayyam, Sachal has devoted much of his poetry to the symbolism of Wine and Tavern, but he warns that he is not a votary of wine and a lover of the cup in the literal sense but of the Eternal Saqi, who is the source of divine inebriation.

Neither we keep company with the flask,
Nor do we concern ourselves with the goblet;
Saqi is the Goal of lovers, says Sachal.

Hafiz also says: 'Truly, we do not drink wine and yet we are intoxicated. It is not the juice of grapes we mean but the wine of Love.'

Sachal calls his spiritual Guide 'Pir-e-Mughan' i.e, the Chief of Magians. This is the terminology of Persian poets which Shah Latif rejected in his poetry. He uses the typical Sindhi word 'Kalal' or 'Kalar' for the wine-seller. About Saqi says Sachal:

How can I express my gratitude
To the Saqi who gave me a draught;
He made me distracted and himself became invisible.

The typical conceit of this wine philosophy is 'the sacrifice of one's head' as a symbol for the annihilation of self-conceit. Mansoor is the usual ideal of lovers of God.

It was this Cup that beheaded Mansoor;
Drunk with this sip, he abandoned his head.

Sachal worships Mansoor and calls himself the Mansoor of his own time. He is in ecstasy when he sings of Mansoor:

Mansoor mounted the gibbet, verily he was a favourite of God;
He drank His wine and became intoxicated;
His history is truly a marvel.
Immeasurable is the pain of Love;
Self-sacrifice is the adornment of Lovers;
In Sachu's head also is the effect of this wine;
This is the wonder of Love.

In his typical way, he gives to divine intoxication precedence over religious forms and ceremonies, much to the annoyance of devotees of orthodox religion.

For instance, he invites Mullas to his banquet of wine and exhorts them to abandon their theology and drink deep from the mystic juice:

O Mulla! leave the books and take a cup of wine;
In a moment, oh revered divine, you shall be intoxicated;
Abandon your orthodoxy, o Kazi! be a toper;
Love will absolve you of all these exertions.

Again he says:

You shall not go near the prayer carpet,
If you quaff the Wine of Love.

## Mystic Majesty

What was I There, what am I here?
There I had another Name, here I have a new one;
I have come here as a Lover, Sachu! There I was in
Beloved's garb.

Thus does Sachal proclaim his Divine Glory and Origin—In Heaven God, on earth Man. Sachal does not believe in self-concealment as Shah Latif does. He shouts from minarets:

Reticence is an impediment, demolish it asunder:
Beat the drum of 'Anal-Haq', O Lover!

Sachal openly calls himself God who had come to this planet as a tourist—in the image of Man is the Divine Sovereign.

The Divine Tourist has come as Man;
He travels here in human garb for a moment or so;
My satguru (Master) says, 'Sachal, you are truly that
Sovereign.'

Not by self-torture or penances can man attain self-realisation, not even by prostrations or prayers. Those who have reached that stage know no sorrow or pain, no rosary or recitation. It is a state beyond wordly joys and sorrows, beyond mundane pleasures and pains, beyond penances and prayers.

In that state, there is neither affliction nor comfort;
Neither this nor that, neither attributes nor arts;
Neither prayer nor devotion, neither revelations nor miracles;
Neither pain nor feeling, neither sorrow nor joy;
Neither vision nor view, neither pleasure nor enjoyment;
Neither body nor soul, neither life nor langour;
Neither happiness nor misery, neither feeling nor agony;
Neither mystery nor modesty, all is wonderment;
Sachu! it is pure Truth, it is all Tranquility.

The mystic, though visible in this world in the garb of man, is not governed by the laws of the elements, of which

the human body is composed. He is Pure Spirit, unfettered by bonds of birth or family or caste. Sachal says:

Neither am I made of dust nor of air, neither fire nor water,
Neither am I born nor have I any descent, neither have I mother nor father;
Why ask about Sachal's origin, my Name is 'Unknowable'.

Nicholson's following rendering of Rumi's lines serves to illustrate the identical nature of the declarations of the two mystics:

I am not of water nor fire, I am not of the froward wind;
I am not of moulded clay: I have mocked at them all,
O son, I am not Shams-i-Tabriz, I am the Pure Light.
If thou seest me, beware! Tell not any one what thou hast seen.

In one of his ghazals, Rumi says, 'Although ostensibly the tree produces the fruit, it is the fruit that produces the tree. Hence the great mystics and prophets have declared that in the beginning they were and in the end also they will be. Ostensibly we are descended from Adam but in reality Adam owes his descent to us; I was before Adam, I am the Pure Essence.'

Sachal's declaration in no way differs from that of Rumi:
How can I conceal my real Origin and profess some other origin!
I manifest my Pure Essence, I have demolished the body;
Within and without, it is My Sovereignty;
Sachu is All Truth, whose Sway is everywhere.

Man should neither bow to any person nor prostrate at any place. He must bow to himself and prostrate before himself, for he himself is the goal of all worship and adoration.

Bow to yourself, for you are the Sacred Sanctuary;
You are the worshipper, you are the worshipped.
Look nowhere else, you are yourself the only goal;
Sachu! understand this that the Beloved is within you.

## Know the One in Many

'UNITY in diversity' is a theory, which is the essence of all philosophy, but sufi poets have elaborated it in a variety of colourful expressions and images. Sachal gives it varied garments, all thrilling and captivating in their own way.

Sachal dwells on this idea in the very beginning of his *Risalo*:

Sachal! all is Truth, the One in many;
From Alif (God) emanated Adam, raising a tumult;
The Hindu and the Muslim are one, fall not into error;
Be a blooming Rose, let them make you a martyr like
Mansoor.

He quotes the Qoran in evidence:

'Know thyself in thy own image.'
Why do you recite 'Allah Allah'? you are yourself Allah;
You are the seer, you are the hearer, the Qoran is the
witness;
There is no doubt in this that God is one.

He is One, the Unique Sovereign, who surveys His own theatricals on the stage of the world in the form of Man. He reads the Vedas. He reads the Qoran; He plays the roles of Christ and Mohammad. It is He who is Hanuman and none else but He. He has cast Himself in wonderment.

Sachu! God is One without a shadow of doubt;
The King in varied images sees His own spectacle;
At one place He is Christ, at another Mahammed and at
another Hanuman;
He of His own choice has cast Himself in wonderment.
Man is neither an idolator, nor is he an Islami,
Neither Hindi (Indian) nor Sindhi, nor is he a Shami
(Syrian)
Neither is He in motion, nor is He static;
The Master is acting as His own servant.

He has no colour, no geographical attachments. The difference between Moses and Pharao is only a superficial one:

Of colourlessness are colours born;
Between Moses and Pharao the difference is nil.

Again:

He who was non-manifest became manifest;
He who was manifest in the beginning became non-manifest;
When that non-manifest becomes manifest, He becomes manifest;
You shall know that Manifest only when you become non-manifest.

The significance of the verse, on analysis, becomes quite manifest. God, who was manifest before creation, has hidden Himself behind this veil of creation. It is His creation that now seems manifest; but he, who rends the veil of illusion and loses his identity, sees Him (Manifest) and for him His creation becomes non-manifest. Says Hafiz:

*Mian-e ashiq-o-maishuq pardeh hayil neest;*
*To khud hijab-e-khudi Hafiz az miyan barkhiz.*
Between the Lover and Beloved there is no veil;
Hafiz! you are the veil before yourself, lift it.

This removing of the veil and losing one's identity is termed 'dying before death' in sufi circles. Says Sachal:

Those who die before death, never say 'I';
These faqirs deem foe and friend alike;
These wise ones breathe in the valley of Unity;
Forgetting 'I' and 'Thou', they behold Self;
The preceptor and the disciple they think as one;
They peep within and know that He and His image (man) are one.

The following 'kafi' of Sachal is quite famous and so soul-captivating when sung that I cannot resist the temptation of quoting it in full to illustrate how eloquent he waxes on his favourite theme that God manifests Himself in various forms:

Sometimes Christ, sometimes Moses, sometimes as Pharao have I ruled;
Sometimes as Mansoor, sometimes as Shams-ul-Haq, I have invited tortures on myself;
Sometimes as Dara (Darius), sometimes as Sikandar (Alexander), I have subjugated domains,
Sometimes Ayaz, sometimes Mahmud, and sometimes have I called myself a slave;
Sometimes as Laila, sometimes as Majnun, I have sighed in the streets;
Sometimes I have named myself Shadad and built a new paradise;
Sometimes Wamiq and Azra and sometimes Shirin and Farhad have I called myself;
Sometimes Zulaikha; sometimes as Yusif (Joseph), have I been Emperor of Egypt;
Sometimes Ram Sita, sometimes Lachman and sometimes Dahesar (Rawan) I have made myself;
Sometimes Nimrod, sometimes as Ibrahim have I been cast into fire;
Sometimes Dawood (David), sometimes as Sulaiman (Solomon) have I flown on my throne;
Sometimes Punhu, sometimes as Sasui, have I wandered in mountains;
Sometimes tying bells to my feet I have jingled them;
Sometimes I have remembered the verses of the Qoran, sometimes danced like a dancer;
Sometimes I have shouted in ecstasy, sometimes whirled;
Sometimes I have donned dresses of brocade, sometimes roamed in tatters;
Sometimes a beloved, sometimes as a lover I have been engaged in dalliance of eyes;
Sometimes have I preached endlessly, sometimes expounded the Mystery;
Now calling myself 'Sachu', have I manifested myself here and sung songs of spirit.

## Yoga and Yogis

THE saint poets of Sind have all sung the praise of yogis and extolled their ascetic ways. Shah Latif wandered in the company of yogis for three years and visited even Hinglaj with them, subjecting himself to severe discipline, trials and tribulations. He has recorded those trials and tribulations and also yogic observances in 'Sur Ramkali'. Sachal did not travel in the company of such ascetics but it is manifest from his 'Sur Jog' that he had spiritual connections and affinity with them.

Legend says that he had association with yogi Vishivanath, who used to dwell on the Hindukush (a mountain in the north west of Sind). The yogi often used to fly to meet Sachal and discourse with him. Muslim Dervishes have used the word 'yogi' in two senses: Hindu ascetic or 'Man of God', who is completely detached from the world and who perfects himself in the spiritual domain. Some of the Muslim Faqirs have even donned yogic garments of ochre colour and called themselves by turn yogis and sufis. Sachal calls himself a yogi in several of his verses:

> I am a yogi and will remain a yogi, a mighty yogi;
> I am neither a Mulla nor a Brahmin, nor do I recite the verses of the Qoran,
> Neither I recite Pothis and Pauris (Hindu scriptures) nor the discourses of the Gita,
> I belong neither to East nor West, neither Earth nor Heaven.

This is how he describes Hindu ascetics:

> Mother! the ascetics are merged in the Ganga (Ganges);
> These men of renunciation float in the celestial realm;
> Their contemplation is ever concentrated on their lighted fire.

Again:

> The yogis are absorbed in the word of the Guru;

They discourse on divinity among themselves;
They are bathed with the waters of the Ganga and Jamuna since Eternity.

It seems he was inspired by a yogi, who augmented the divine flame already burning in him by his effulgent countenance and illumined words. He acknowledges his debt of gratitude to the yogi again and again. He says that he was once visited by a yogi in his abode and was thrown into a trance by the melody of his flute and his ascetic appearance.

I recognised the yogi who of his own accord entered my abode,
He had dressed himself in the garb of an ascetic as an artful device;
He had long yogic tresses and his body was smeared with ash;
His flute's melody entranced my soul:
God had brought about this union between me and the yogi;
For him I have now sprinkled perfume and musk:
It was he who revealed to me the entire mystery.

According to Sachal's testimony there were in his time true yogis, whom scarcely any one could recognise. An utter dearth of such divine souls was yet to come and he has clearly hinted at this; and who knows that today there may be no trace of true men of God anywhere in the world, considering its prevalent atmosphere and vibrations:

Yogis are still in the world today;
Lamentations over their disappearance will later ensue;
Rarely does one recognise such Yogis.

It is evident from Sachal's poetry, especially from his 'Sur Jog', that he had associations with yogis, who had benefited him and even elevated him spiritually by their divine powers. And those yogis were ostensibly Hindu Sanyasins, besmeared with ash, wearing long knotted hair and carrying with themselves nothing but a pipe, the symbol of divine melody and an instrument that cries like the human soul in divine separation. All the mystery of God, Man and Universe was revealed to

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him by some unknown perfect yogi. He himself acknowledges his debt of gratitude to him.

'He had yogic hair and his body was all smeared with ash; He unravelled the entire riddle to Sachu.'

## Love and Beauty

'TEMPORAL love is a bridge to Divine Love' is too well known a sufi saying to be repeated; and 'earthly beauty is a reflection of Divine Beauty' is too often repeated in mystic philosophy to need repetition. It is only how a particular mystic poet has clothed this philosophy that matters. Sachal was an ardent adorer of beauty and he is also called a Prophet of Love, who had chosen Daraz (his native place) as the centre for the propagation of his philosophy. His disciples call Daraz 'the place where Love thundered and Beauty raged'.

Jami and Rumi are among those illustrious mystics who have expounded with force and elegance the philosophy of Beauty and Love. Two outstanding illustrations may here be cited from their poetry with advantage. These examples embrace by their very nature the philosophy of Sachal and mystics of his calibre. Says Jami:

O God! till Thy Beauty was revealed in Laila,
Majnun had not been fired with Love;
Till Thou hadst given silvery cheeks to Azra,
Mercury-like tears had not flowed from Wamiq's eyes;
Due to Thee is Love and Beauty,
There is no Lover or Beloved but Thee;
The beauty of fair ones is a veil before Thee,
Thou hast concealed Thy Beauty behind that Veil.

Again Rumi:

He whose garment is torn by Love,
Is free from temptations and evils,
Blessed be thou Love, our Lunacy!
Thou art the Physician of our ailments.
This body of clay is elevated to Heaven by Love;
The mountain itself dances when it hears its name.

Sachal goes further:

If I interpret Love for all time,

A hundred Resurrections will pass;
And yet my commentary will not end.

Of all the paths that lead the aspirant to the Divine Goal, the path of Love, according to Sachal, alone is true.

He says:

The path of love alone is true,
All other paths are futile.

Love, he says, has been bestowed only on Man; even angels have been denied this boon. It is on account of this blessing that Man has become the 'Crown of Creation.' Angels will always remain angels but Man, through Love, can become God. When the Gift of Love was offered by God, even Angels and Heavens shrank from it; only a few exalted souls accepted it. Sachal says:

Lovers alone bear the burden of Love;
Every one cannot do so;
Angels and Heavens accepted not
This Gift of Love.

The price of this gift is 'the sacrife of one's head', hence all shrank from it except men of God. Sachal's ideal is Mansoor.

He says:

Do as King Mansoor did.

Even Aristotle and Plato, he says, did not understand the mystery of Love. They were men of reason, hence this mystery baffled them.

To Sachal, the pleasures of Paradise are nothing without a glimpse of the Fair One. Angels, fairies, the sun, the moon lose their lustre and resplendence before His Beauty. The way he describes the beauty of fair ones has a certain peculiarity of its own, as is evident from the examples cited below:

The drops of sweat look so lovely on the face of the Beloved;
They shine like dew drops on petals of flowers;

These pearls create a stir in the hearts of lovers.
Fair ones have spread their tresses on their faces,
As a hyacinth spreads its tender shoots at dawn.
Fair ones have spread their ringlets on their cheeks;
Cobras are now encircling the anguished lovers.

Sachal sees the Light of God in the eyes of his Beloved as Moses saw it on Mount Tur Sena. Some seekers aspire to see Him on His Heavenly Throne but Sachal gets a glimpse of His Mystery from his fair one's eyes. Some in vain sigh to see His Glory but Sachal sees it in his Beautiful One's face. He says:

Some seek the Beloved in Heaven on His Throne,
O Fair One! we have seen Divine Mystery in your eyes.
Some are eager to see the rays of His Effulgence within,
We have enjoyed His glimpse in the Fair One's face.

## Sachal's Satirical Poetry

SUFI poets of Sind, including Shah, have expressed their resentment against the attitude of Mullas and Kazis towards religion and their rigid, narrow and bigoted interpretation of its tenets and principles. Even Sami, the Vedantic poet and a serene saint, has castigated Brahmins and Pandits for their ignorance and self-aggrandisement. Sachal has been more caustic and bitter and his language annoyed the priest class not without reason. It is, however, undeniable that divine knowledge is only given to lovers of God and not to theologians, as Sachal rightly says:

Divine knowledge is revealed to Lovers,
What do Mullas and Kazis know of it?

In one of his famous kafis, Sachal says:

I drink wine in the public square,
I care not for a Mulla or a Kazi,
I am intoxicated by the Beloved's blandishment,
I have forgotten fasts and remember no prayers.

The poet expresses his sadness over the dry nature of Mullas, who had no aesthetic sense and were devoid of romantic sensibility. How could the Kazi, who was all the time absorbed in legal complexities, know the taste of Divine wine! This is how Sachal addresses Kazis and Mullas:

O Kazi! Let me tell you the truth—leave these legal questions;
Let us drink together a sip—do not be a Mulla;
Sachal! those who are astray in this path shall never realise God.
Mulla! abandon your books, drink a cup of Wine;
In a moment, Mulla Sahib! you will be self-oblivious.
O Akhwand! if you were by chance to see the ringlets of fair ones,
You will be spiritually delighted, though beaten with shoes.

Finding that his appeal fell on empty minds, Sachal indulged in a little raillery:

We are strongly afflicted with Love,
Beat hard the pate of the Mulla.

Addressing the Kazi, he says:

Hear, O Kazi! the refuting argument of Love,
We have Love and you have knowledge,
How can you be reconciled with us?

Instead of leading a life of piety, austerity and abstinence, the Mullas abandoned themselves to mere ritualism, gluttony and avarice and maintained their position by giving the illiterate and innocent people of Sind false promises of Paradise and fears of Hell. They knew not that by their sham and hypocrisy they were only paving their own way to perdition. To the Mulla he says:

You take refuge in religion and the prayer carpet,
And in a multitude of papers;
Why do you resort to false preaching,
And strangle yourself with a rope?

By 'rope' perhaps the poet means 'rosary' and by 'papers' religious commentaries.

It is not without reason that the Mullas offer prayers for departed souls—they do so not for the salvation of the dead but for enjoying the rich dishes that are served to them after the funeral services. The Mullas are in the least concerned about the fate of the departed in the other world. Their eyes, he observed, were fixed on the pots on fire and their brain derived exhilaration from the fragrance that emanated from the dainties prepared. They often pretended to eat little but once they sat for dinner they filled the very fibres of their bellies and did not get up until both the pots and the dishes were empty.

The Mullas offer prayers for the dead ardently for the sake of dishes;

With a staff in their hand, they are magnetised by cauldrons;
They settle down to dinner and fill their bellies to the full;
The Mullas say that they eat not, but they consume large vessels;
Sachu speaks the truth—they strut near the ovens.

Sachal ultimately exonerates Mullas and Kazis from all blame on the ground that it is God who plays their roles. It is He who is Mulla or Kazi and it is He who confers martyrdom on a Mansoor or a Shams Tabriz. Had there been no Mullas or Kazis, how would have these lovers of God earned immortality through martyrdom? Sachal explains the mystery thus:

Thou art present everywhere, lift Thy Veil;
Sometimes Thou art a Kazi and sendest Mansoor to the gallows;
Thou didst work in the garb of the Mullas,
Who gave orthodox verdict against Mansoor.

Again:

The Beloved appears in every form,
Sometimes He is Mulla, sometimes Mufti,
And sometimes He utters 'Anal-Haq'.

## Sachal's Devotion to his Master

ORIENTAL mystic poets have all stressed the absolute need of a preceptor on the spiritual path which, without his guidance, is full of unimaginable dangers and tribulations. The Persian poet Rumi and the Sindhi poets Sachal and Sami have, however, not only acknowledged their indebtedness to their respective Murshids or Gurus but have recited their names again and again. Rumi in his Diwan and Sami in his Salokas have adopted their Masters' names—Sham Tabriz and Sami respectively. Sami's name was Chainrai and his Guru's Sami Menghraj. Rumi's personal name was Jalal-ud-Din and Shams Tabriz was his Murshid. Shah, however, is silent about his Master's identity and so also several Persian and Sindhi mystic poets but they have all stressed the importance of the Guru. Thus Shah Latif says:

Countless are the robbers and brigands on the way;
O humble aspirant! take a Guide in this wilderness.

Attar, Sachal's idol says:

Take at Pir (Master), because this journey without a Pir,
Is full of dangers, perils and calamities.

Rumi composed his 'Diwan' in the name of his Master Shams-ul-Tabriz. For him, all things and creatures are but shadows or clouds, his Master being the Sun. Nicholson thus translates one of Rumi's significant verses:

As the Sun moving, clouds behind him run,
All hearts attend thee, O Tabriz's Sun!

Sachal calls himself 'the Canine slave of his Master's Door', trusting every syllable emanating from the lips of Abdu'l Haq and seeing his preceptor's effulgence in both the worlds:

We see your effulgence, O Beloved, in both the worlds;
We trusted your true words;

Sachu is your portal's canine slave since eternity;
We have placed ourselves at your feet, O Master Abu'l Haq!

Sachal, like every other ideal aspirant on the path, strove hard and strained his every nerve to win his master's beneficence. The following 'Kafi' is significant in this respect and is universally popular.

May you be pleased, O Beautiful One!
We shall do what pleaseth you.
Besmeared with ashes, we shall become ascetics,
We shall wander like hermits,
If you be pleased with these austerities.
Wearing a loin cloth we shall be naked yogis,
We shall drink the intoxicating cup of wine,
If you only take us in your refuge.
We shall become jugglers, scaling the poles and dancing on the rope;
If you be won by some such device;
We shall dance in the market and play on drums and flutes;
If you be reconciled with this artifice.
Sachu devises a thousand means;
May you some day think of your dog;
I am your lover, I am your lover.

Sachal reminds us of the famous injunction of Hafiz when he says:

You will sit with folded hands in the presence of your Master;
As the Master says, so shall you recite the prayers of non-believers;
Guru and Gobind are the same—thus move on this path;
You shall obliterate all colours, Sachal! and become colourless;
You shall have to make this reconciliation.

Hafiz also says:

Soak your prayer carpet with wine if your Master so ordains;
Because the spiritual preceptor knows the rules of the path.

As a reward for this implicit obedience, the Master assures the aspirant that he shall ever be with him. Sachal was also thus rewarded:

True are the words of my Master that I today recall;
Since that day we have accepted them with the reverence of eyes;
Sire! you had made this pledge before all others,
That you shall be with us every moment—we are inspired by that word.

## Sachal's Kafis

SACHAL's 'Kafis' are very popular in Sind and are sung with fervour and gusto in every congregation of sufis and lovers of mystic songs. Mirza Ali Quli Beg took great pains to collect and collate them and incorporated more than 900 in his litho-type edition more than half a century back. Every Kafi is sung according to a particular 'sur' or tune of the science of Indian Music. In Mirza's edition, every Kafi's 'Sur' is mentioned over it. Shah Latif's 'Vais' in the Risalo are also Kafis and their composition only slightly varies from that of Kafis. He was the pioneer of these mystic songs. Some of the Kafis or Vais attributed to Shah Latif do not exist in the Risalo but tradition has so established them that they are taken to be genuine. Sachal was a prolific creator of Kafis and they are not only in Sindhi but also in Saraiki, a language spoken in the north of Sind by the Balóch tribe, to which the Mirs of Sind belonged. Sachal lived in the days of Mirs and he cherished and loved that language. It is very akin to Panjabi and also has affinity with Sindhi. It is a very sweet language and some of our Sindhi poets such as Dalpat, Bedil, Bekas, etc., besides Sachal, have given it a literary and spiritual status by singing songs of divine love in it. It is easily understandable by Sindhis and Sindhi singers sing Kafis in Saraiki with a rare melody and intoxicating ecstasy.

A typical Kafi of Sachal, in Saraiki, appealing for its pathetic intensity and romantic novelty, is reproduced here in English version:

Wondrous is the tale of Love, such is the tale of Love;
The fair ones met and decided to slay the Lover.
We shall put the Lover's ashes into our eyes as collyrium;
What shall we say of the Lover, who will become collyrium?
Let us prepare and perfume yellow clay for the Lover;
We shall wash him in the ocean of blood and then with
washing powder;

After washing him, we shall give him several immersions,
We shall build a palace of colourful artistry;
We shall use the Lover's bones as beams and columns;
The Lover is the deer and the Beloved the Hunter—such will be our hunting;
We shall shoot our arrows with mysterious glances through our eye-lashes;
We shall take the Lover to our abode and flay him there;
We shall cut his flesh into pieces and roast them on rods in fire;
Then his fragments shall be absorbed in our heart and soul;
Our eternal Lover is Sachu, we shall go in quest of him;
His abode is in Daraz, there we shall seek him out;
We shall accost him there and shall share all love with him;
He is ours and we are his, we have verily a true Lover.

Some of Sachal's Kafis that enshrine his philosophy of God's all-pervasiveness and myriad forms are so popular that they are sung almost in all congregations. Both in his verses and Kafis his favourite theme is the manifestation of the Supreme Being in all forms. Sachal's chief regret, however, is that he has descended on this earth as a slave, though he was All Glorious on the Heavenly Throne. A typical illustration may be cited here:

I languish in this sorrow—what I was and what I have become!
Why I became a slave, I know not; else I was truly an Emperor;
I was All Wise in that Realm, here I have become an ignoramus;
Rarely anyone knows this, rarely anyone realises this;
This is the arena of Men of God.
Since Eternity I am an immigrant from there, carrying a burden of sorrows.
From one abode to another, have I been purely a guest;
A wave springs from the ocean and again becomes the sea;
This wonder has cast Sachal in amazement.

Two well known stages in mystic experience—Ascent (aurúj) and Descent (Nuzul)—are nowhere better illustrated

than in Sachal's poetry, specially Kafis. In one, he proclaims himself as the Monarch of the Universe, in another he wails as a slave, weeping at the door of his All Beautiful Beloved:

Thou art the Monarch of Beauty, I am thy slave;
O Beautiful One! I long for Thee all the time.
Forsake not those that are always Thine;
My duty is to submit my salutations to Thee.
Night and day, my heart was in melancholy,
Until, o Sweet One! my Perceptor conveyed Thy following message to me:
'Pine not, remove from your heart all sorrow and grief;
You are with us from eternity to eternity;
Annihilate all pain, cherish this solace.
Know for certain that here and there I am your Guide;
You are ours and we are yours;
Your appeal is all accepted.'

Thus does our poet sometimes ascend to the zenith of glory and sometimes descend to the depth of misery; sometimes he weeps as a forlorn being and sometimes he beams in the light of hope.

In the folowing famous Kafi, Sachal exhorts the aspirant to soak himself in the rain water of Love and to abandon all thought of self in this arena of Divine Search. This is not a place for self-conceit but for shedding tears of blood night and day. Once this precious life is passed, no repentance will recompense us:

If you are a lover, be drenched in the rain of Love;
If you think of self, enter not this arena;
Sacrifice yourself completely, this is not a place of self-vaunting;
Believe me, O Friend! this is a pursuit for the sense-bereft;
One has to shed tears of blood for the Sweet One night and day;
This bargain is not made without sacrificing one's head;
Nothing I achieved, my life has passed in vain;
It behoves you not, dear friend! to be so heedless;
This is a precious moment, whereafter you shall repent;
Once it is gone, no penitence will count;

Convey this state of mine to my Master;
My Master is the True Abdu'l Haq.

This is how the poet describes the majesty of a lover and the preciousness of human life; and in that respect the woeful and gross ignorance of worldly men. They do not respond to the call of Love, but are at the beck and call of Lucifer:

The Lover blooms like a lovely Lotus;
His glimpse is a wondrous wonder, his colour of a mysteriously red flower;
If you see the eye of a Lover, it is immaculate like glass and chinaware;
A flowery tile stands no comparison with a chinaware, although it be multi-coloured;
Where there is this watery Flower, the Beloved's mystery is there;
How can the Lover restrain himself from enjoying His Glimpse;
For he is like an ever thirsty moth;
In human form vibrates breath, without breath the form is worthless;
If there is flavour of pain in breath, it is marvellously fine;
The dominance of Devil prevails over every soul;
Life means goodness, else it is the lowest bottom of Hell;
For Sachal, the memory of friends alone is true;
Those who forget Love are made of futile clay.

## Multilingual Poetry and Influences

To ATTAR, the Persian saint poet of Nishapur, Sachal expresses his spiritual indebtedness more than once in his Persian poetry. Attar enjoys celebrity for his 'Mantiqut-Tair' (Language of Birds). In that celebrated work the Persian poet has described the troubles, trials and tribulations of the aspirant in the garb of a fable of thirty birds, who went in quest of their King 'Simurgh' (Phoenix), famed for his Abode on Mount Koh Qa'f (CAUCASUS). They crossed deserts and mountains and seas under the leadership of Hud-hud (Lapwing) until they reached their destination. Their wonder knew no bounds when the thirty birds beheld that each one of them had become a 'Simurgh'. Their sufferings had so purified them that they themselves had been transformed into so many forms of Phoenix. Symbolically, a man in true quest of God becomes God Himself.

In 'Diwan-e-Ashkar', Sachal calls himself 'Ashkar' (Manifest). In his Persian poetry he says:

Since I am the Phoenix of Caucasus,
I turn not my face towards the Carcass (world);
My flight is like Anqa's between Earth and Heaven.

In one of his ghazals in the Diwan, he makes this appeal to Zephyr:

O Zephyr! tell us the truth about Nishapur;
I sacrifice my soul and body over its dust. .
Present this petition of the poor lover in his (Attar's) court:
Pour into my empty cup, wine from thy tavern;
What am I, poor and helpless! thou art the fulfiller of my desire;
I have fallen into duality, administer a remedy to me;
Liberate me from the prison of self-conceit.
Solicit from the beloved Attar, who is the Tavern-keeper
A blessing for yourself, O Ashkar! from that God-man.

Sachal wrote his Masnavis in Persian under the inspiration of Jalal-ud-Din Rumi. Besides his Diwān, there are five Masnavis of his creation: Raz Nameh, Rahbar Nameh, Gudaz Nameh, Tar Nameh, and Waslat Nameh. He dedicates a Ghazal to Rumi in his 'Diwan-e-Ashkar', expressing his reverence for the great Persian mystic and his desire to be completely merged in him. (The ghazal is quoted in full in the succeeding pages.)

It is also not to be forgotten that Persian was the court language of his day and writing poetry in Persian was the prevailing literary fashion. It was not free from artificial conceits and embellishments. Sachal's Persian poetry, however, was the language of a mystic heart and not the empty effusion of a rhyming brain.

There is a lengthy ghazal in 'Diwan-e-Ashkar' which is reminiscent of one of the ghazals of Hafiz. Sachal, like Hafiz, throws light on the 'Revolution and Tyranny of Time' in this ghazal; a few significant couplets of which will speak for themselves:

I have seen the Court of rulers,
I have seen the waves of Oman (high seas),
On the poor there are a hundred iniquities,
I have seen the rule of kings.
Beggars become kings and kings beggars,
I have seen the revolution of Time.
The prayerful reciters of the Book are deedless,
I have seen Kazis without any knowledge.
None takes the righteous and straight path,
I have seen misguided souls.
All cultured men are in sorrow and grief,
I have seen worthless men in mirth and happiness.
A golden belt studded with rubies,
I have seen round the neck of asses.
At the door of rulers in humiliation and misery,
I have seen pious and religious men.
For the sake of this worthless world,
I have seen scholars in distraction.
Intellectuals suffer ignominy for a farthing,
I have seen pure gold adorning dogs.

Sons are quarrelling with fathers,
I have seen shameless and discourteous souls.
Oh! due to the fear of administrators,
I have seen men with pale countenances.
The realms of Moghuls have been conquered,
I have seen them in the possession of Westerners.
Ultimately they will reach the state of Sind,
I have seen a hundred devastations caused by invaders.

In the last couplet, Sachal has predicted the calamity that was to descend on his province in 1843, fourteen years after his death—the British conquest of Sind and the obliteration of the rule of Mirs. The same warning, as shown earlier, he sounds in his Sindhi poetry also.

It seems Sachal's Urdu poetry was inspired by the prevailing literary fashion in the Court of Delhi. Ghalib, the great Urdu poet, was thirty-two when Sachal bade farewell to this world. 'Till 1822,' writes the learned Professor Mujeeb in his excellent monograph on Ghalib, 'when he was twenty-five years old, Ghalib wrote in Urdu. Then he took to writing in Persian.... The phase of writing almost exclusively in Persian lasted till 1850, when Ghalib began to be invited to the Court and had to write in the language of the Court, Urdu, but he did not give up Persian. The seven years that followed are regarded as the mature phase of his Urdu poetry.' Sachal's Urdu poetry was not due to Court influence. No such demarcation is possible in the case of Sachal, whose poetry exists mainly in four languages—Sindhi, Saraiki, Urdu and Persian. Perhaps his poetic expression in these four languages was not the creation of four different periods but of four different moods throughout his life.

In his scholarly discussion of the poetic tradition in Urdu, Professor Mujeeb touches the symbols of Saqi and Maikhana and observes: 'Mansur Hallaj, the Sufi who was hanged or crucified for saying, "I am the Truth" or, in other words, "I am God," became the symbol of self-assertion, and gallows (dar) and "halter" (rasan), symbolic of what a man should

expect for fearless utterance of the truth.' In Sachal's poetry, whether it be Sindhi or Urdu, Saraiki or Persian, all these symbols exist and Mansoor Hallaj is his ideal. Nowhere is this persecution for fearless utterance of the truth better illustrated in his poetry than in the following poem in 'rekhtah' (Urdu):

One day in the Market I saw a wondrous sight,
A poor nightingale was a captive in the hands of some lads.
Her feathers and wings had been tightly tied by them,
She fluttered but was not freed, she indulged in a million wails.
I enquired of her state and she said to me:
See! where have I fallen, leaving the rosy garden!
You, who smilingly talk to me, are you not aware,
That one who becomes a lover can alone know my condition?
He who proclaims Love, has a halter round his neck,
Sachu! this body and soul be sacrificed over the Beloved!

Again he reverts to his inspirer Mansoor in another Urdu poem:

Whether it be Aristotle or Plato,
All are amazed by this wonderment.
Here is verily the Abode of Simurgh (Phoenix).
Hear the truthful utterance of Mansoor—
That King says, 'I am God'.
He gave Light to Love,
O! without end would be this narration.
In the Court of that Exalted One,
Mine are hundreds of salutations.
Sachu with heart and soul,
Is a slave of that Emperor's slaves

Then, as usual, in a separate poem, he proclaims himself as King:

If any one wants to see my inner glory, I am Emperor, I am Emperor;
My name is not Sachu, my name is Perfect and Pure.

Hussain Mansoor, who attained Godhead and spread his doctrine of 'Anal Haq' (I am God or Truth) was finally put on the Cross and mercilessly tortured. He suffered a very cruel death. The example of Mansoor had a wondrous effect on the seekers of Truth—he became their most venerated idol and martyrdom became their cherished goal. Sachal acknowledges again and again, as shown earlier, his profound indebtedness to Mansoor's grace. Mansoor, it is said, had visited India in the 10th century and Attar in the 12th century. Attar died in 1229-30 A.D. After Mansoor's death, his son Hashim bin Mansoor also established an order of Dervishes, who preached the doctrine of 'Anal Haq'. Bayazid Bastami introduced the doctrine of Fana Filla (merging in God) into sufism:

Praise be to me! Great is My Glory'! 'O Thou I!'
'In my vesture there is naught but God.'
'I went from God to God till they all cried to me in me.'

His echo is heard again and again in Sachal.

A new spiritual poetry was evolved in Persia because of Sufism. Jalal-ud-Din Rumi (d. 1273 A.D.) expounded all the sufistic doctrines in his Masnavi. His philosophy was: 'God is all Beautiful and He manifests His Beauty in His Creation. All is Beloved, the lover is non-existent.'

All the Persian Sufi poets—Sa'adi, Hafiz, Attar, Jami, Omar Khayyam—have used mystic symbolism and illustrated the relations of the human soul and God by romantic allegories of earthly love, beauty and wine. The mystical quatrains of Abu Said (d. 1048) of Khorasan are also worthy of praisworthy note. All this tradition of Persia's sufi poetry is carried on by Sachal in his poetry. His poetry is a banquet of so many mystic voices—not an empty echo but a voice of deep conviction born of realisation. A few verses from his Persian Diwan, 'Diwan-e-Ashkar', are illuminating:

Mansoor: He who wants to attain the position of Hallaj (Mansoor)
Should detach his soul from his temporary body.
None has displayed that heroism on this path,
Which Mansoor displayed in the arena of Love.
He (God) appeared in the garb of Mansoor,
He attained immortality through martyrdom.
Attar: Behold the love-striken lane of the market of Nishapur,
Where Attar, that Man of God, flourished.
Attar has said: Drink the cup of the wine of love,
Secretly and openly, night and day, with purity and love.

To Rumi, who wrote his Diwan under the name of his Master Shams-ul-Tabriz, Sachal expresses his indebtedness in the following ghazal:

If you once become the dust of the feet of King Tabriz,
All knowledge of Divinity will be revealed to you.
From his poetry the fragrance of intoxication inflitrates my soul,
It makes my imagination surge like the waves of the ocean.
When I became intoxicated, I saw neither this nor that,
I saw the King of Kings and no other being.
If any one reads 'Diwan-e-Shams-ul Haq' with faith,
He will become free from self-conceit and 'I and We'.
I am inebriated with his love, Ashkara!
Then what is the remedy of my inebriation, O Muslims!

Sachal is truly called 'Hafiz and Khayyam rolled into one', singing his divine songs mainly under the inspiration of Mansoor, Bayazid, Jami, Rumi and Attar and above all his spiritual preceptor Abdu'l Haq. Of the last he says:

Abdu'l Haq has instructed me thus:
O Lover! recite 'Anal Haq' repeatedly.

In some Surs of his Sindhi poetry, Shah's influence is undeniably discernible, especially in the matter of selection of subject-matter. Like Shah, Sachal also has sung 'Sur sarang' in celebration of rain, the greatest boon of Heaven to Earth. The same symbolism also underlies Sachal's 'Sarang', rain water of Love streaming from the eyes of God's devotees.

Thou art in me, I am in Thee;
As lightning is in clouds, O Beloved!
Eyes wept all night, o friends!
They rained in profusion,
They ceased not doing so even at dawn;
Eyes have learnt the manner of weeping from rain.

Sachal has touched Shah's respective topics in his 'Sur Kohiyari', 'Sur Mumal Rano', 'Sur Khambat', 'Sur Jog' and 'Sur Malkos' —the camel's evil nature, wailings of Mumal in separation of Rano, Marui's lamentations for Malir, eulogy of yogis and the Crow's role as a messenger of Love.

The influence of the poetry and association of Hindu ascetics is also visible in Sachal's poetry:

He who instals Devi (Goddess) in his heart,
And makes it a Mandir (temple)—
That devotee becomes rich within.
O devotee! worship in the Mandir of the heart;
Seek no other path, O pilgrim of Porebandar!
The devotees, who worship within, the image of Mahadev (Lord Shiva),
Verily attain to Realisation.
They perceive Alakh (The Invisible One) every moment in their heart;
The Kaparis (Yogis) keep the mystery hidden within their self.

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